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Kool's Glowing Statistics Speak For Themselves!

By Loretta Manago
Post Staff Writer

The glowing statistics that Kool and the Gang have earned over the years speak for themselves.

Their recent single, "Joanna" saw the band's ninth top 40 pop single since January 1, 1980, making the group the most successful R&B, pop band of the 80's.

In the last four years alone, the band has had five gold LPs in a row, three of which went platinum.

Throughout Kool and the Gang's career, the band has amassed a total of 14 top 40 hits, one of the highest totals ever accumulated by any group—rock, pop or country.

Past reviews by "Rolling Stone" called them the "nicest dance band around" and "Stereo Review" described their album, "As One," "as revitalizing as taking a vacation."

Although Kool and the Gang is excited by their many achievements over the years, their leader, Robert "Kool" Bell uses the past to help them keep their spiraling success in perspective. "We remember what we went through and we remind each other constantly that it wasn't always roses from day one," remarked Kool.

The story of Kool and the Gang began in 1961. And what began as a childhood interest in music led to a serious commitment. Having grown up in the Greenwich Village environment, "Kool," his brother, Ronald and most of the future members of the band were hanging out at the legendary Cafe Wha. Here they were influenced by such jazz luminaries as John Coltrane, McCoy Tyner and Pharoah Sanders. That influence led "Kool" and the other guys to form their own group, The Jazziacs.

It wasn't long before the Jazziacs became Kool and the Gang and they shifted their musical direction



KOOL AND THE GANG

...Basking in current success

from jazz to rhythm and blues. From '69 to '76 the group proceeded to make some of the funkiest music ever recorded. And with such tunes as "Jungle Boogie" Funky Stuff," and "Hollywood Swinging" Kool and the Gang was forever established as one of America's foremost party bands.

However, the group experienced a dramatic shift when disco became popular. Both the group's

record sales and popularity plummeted. But "Kool" was always determined to keep the group intact. "Our approach was too progressive. We were playing the groove, but with jazz progressions on top. That's not what the public wanted to hear. We

realized that maybe we were too close to the music, that we needed someone objective from the outside to come in. That's when we

decided to look for an outside producer," expounded Kool.

With Deodato as producer and the additional vocals of James (J.T.) Taylor, Kool and the Gang once again soared to the top. They stayed with the format that Deodato had laid for them, but the urge to protect their own musical ideas soon resurfaced.

"We had musical ideas that hadn't been getting

onto records. For example, when we took over as our own producers in "In The Heart," we were able to use jazz progressions on "You Can Do It" and rock guitars on "Tonight," revealed Kool.

This nine male aggregation will be appearing at the Coliseum Saturday

night along with the Bar-Kays, Dazz Band and Evelyn King. The show starts at 7:30 p.m.

Yongue Wins WSOC Scholarship

Charles Jeffrey Yongue is the first winner of the WSOC Television and Radio Scholarship at Johnson C. Smith University.

He will receive a \$1,000 tuition grant for the 1984-85 academic year from Carolina Broadcasting Co., operator of WSOC-AM, FM and television stations.

Yongue, 21, will be a senior Communication Arts major at Smith in the fall. He plans a career in broadcasting.

To gain experience, he has served as one of the principal studio camera operators and as a remote camera operator in cable-production projects conducted by the Black Media Association of Charlotte.

At Smith, he has performed in dramatic productions and has served on the Student Advisory Council to the Communication Arts Department.

Yongue was selected for the scholarship by a reviewing committee composed of Smith faculty members and Ms. Jeanne Bohn, community affairs director at WSOC.

He is the first recipient of a scholarship to be offered annually by WSOC to a senior Communication Arts major who plans a career in broadcasting.

The scholarship was established recently after discussions by Greg Stone, vice president and general manager of WSOC-TV; Lee Morris, vice president and general manager of WSOC radio; Smith President Robert L. Albright; and Communication Arts Head Robert Kreiling.

"The faculty is pleased by the creation of the WSOC Television and Ra-



Charles Yongue
...Communications major

dio Scholarship, and we are proud to have Jeff Yongue as the first winner. He is one of our most experienced and promising students in broadcasting," Kreiling said.

Yongue is on the Dean's List and a member of the Ira Aldridge Drama Guild, Alpha Psi Omega drama honor society and the First United Presbyterian Church of Charlotte.

He is a 1981 graduate of Independence High School, where he was president of the student chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and a member of the track team.

He is the son of Charles and Vaughn Yongue of 1804 LaSalle St. He has one brother, Curtis, 23.

Kool & The Gang

Kool & the Gang riding high on the charts with the single "Tonight", have had another honor as well. When the group performed a recent Nashville concert, Tennessee's governor Lamar Alexander declared Kool and the Gang day in the state.